

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Open Data Policy (ODP) Implementation Plan

I. Introduction and Background

This report documents the US Environmental Protection Agency's implementation plan and current progress in meeting the requirements set forth in the White House "[Open Data Policy –Managing Information as an Asset](#)" Memorandum M-13-13. The Agency understands that the information it manages is of significant interest and value to the public and reaffirms its commitment to share non-sensitive information, be responsive to public requests, and promote the proper use of non-sensitive information as a standard Agency practices. Many of the activities identified in this plan were initiated as part of the Agency's Open Government initiative and progress made on these efforts underscore the significant investment EPA has made in promoting its data for public use--some of which are returning benefits today and others currently underway are anticipated to provide lasting benefits as they mature.

The Agency maintains publicly available registries¹ with associated metadata for EPA data systems, EPA generated datasets, and taxonomies for data systems to help cross reference similar terms used in the environmental community. The EPA [Environmental Dataset Gateway](#) (EDG)² was initially created to catalog geographic data and has since been expanded to register any dataset generated by or made available by EPA. The EDG includes a metadata editor that enables users to modify metadata descriptions which has been downloaded approximately 7,000 times from users around the world. The editor is currently limited to geospatial data, but will be expanded to support other datasets.

EPA will report its progress in promoting data for public use by updating its data set inventory and in meeting other aspects of the Open Data Policy on quarterly basis. Updates will be posted at www.epa.gov/digitalstrategy.

Inventory Schedule Requirement	Due Date	Status
Develop tool to create inventory (EDG)	11/30/13	Complete
Confirm EDG accommodates Open Data Policy metadata	11/30/13	In Progress
Develop capability to create JSON file	11/30/13	Complete
Post link on epa.gov/digitalstrategy	11/30/13	Complete
Include datasets posted on Data.gov before 8/1/13	11/30/13	Complete
Upload snapshot to MAX	11/30/13	Complete
Confirm schema follows Project Open Data (POD)	11/30/13	In Progress
Provide reports to programs to identify metadata holes	Quarterly	In Progress and Ongoing
Create dashboard to measure progress in filling metadata holes	Quarterly	In Progress
Require programs to ID all remaining datasets/systems to determine if the data can be made public	Quarterly	Establish Goals and Track Progress

¹ For more information on EPA's System of Registries, please visit: www.epa.gov/sor

² For more information on the Environmental Dataset Gateway, please visit: <https://edg.epa.gov>

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II. Enterprise Data Inventory – Environmental Dataset Gateway (EDG)

The EDG will serve as the primary tool for generating both the Agency's internal-facing and public-facing inventory that comprise the Open Data Policy requirement for an enterprise data inventory.

Enterprise Data Inventory Requirement	Due Date	Status
Develop an inventory schedule	11/30/13	Complete
Publish inventory schedule on epa.gov/digitalstrategy (via this Plan)	11/30/13	Complete and Ongoing
Create an Enterprise Data Inventory (EDG)	11/30/13	Complete
Submit inventory snapshot to MAX (JSON format)	11/30/13	Complete
Maintain inventory: Expand, Enrich, Open	Quarterly	Ongoing
Upload snapshot quarterly in JSON format on MAX	Quarterly	Ongoing
Update Schedule on epa.gov/digitalstrategy	Quarterly	Ongoing

III. Public Data Listing

The purpose of creating and maintaining a public data listing (PDL) is to improve the discoverability and promote use of non-sensitive data assets. EPA's EDG serves as the PDL, providing the public access to the Agency's non-sensitive data assets. EPA requires publication of datasets in the EDG before it is published to Data.gov. EPA will adopt enhanced metadata requirements to adequately describe datasets registered in the EDG and fulfill Open Data Policy metadata requirements. It will also conduct a review of existing records and take action as needed to ensure each is sufficiently described. The EDG is available to public to view non-restricted information at any time at [Environmental Dataset Gateway](http://EnvironmentalDatasetGateway). EPA will provide a summary of updates to the EDG on a quarterly basis at www.epa.gov/digitalstrategy.

Public Data Listing Requirement	Due Date	Status
Create and publish PDL in JSON format at epa.gov/data	11/30/13	Complete
Maintain the PDL	Ongoing	Ongoing
Include assets where "accessLevel = public" in the EDG	11/30/13	Complete and Ongoing
Include "accessURL" to link the data asset's metadata for all data assets in the PDL	11/30/13	Complete and Ongoing

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IV. Customer Engagement

EPA understands the importance of engaging with the public to help prioritize the Agency's data publication efforts. E.O. 13642 requires all new non-sensitive data collections and information assets created after May 9, 2013 to follow *Open Data* practices and be actively promoted for public use. Data assets created prior to EO 13642 that may not follow *Open Data* practices and will likely require resources to promote for public release. To help direct the Agency's focus and prioritize which datasets are of greatest interest to the public, EPA will include feedback from the public as it prioritizes data publication actions.

The public is encouraged to view our public data listing, follow our updates and provide any feedback from links contained at www.epa.gov/digitalstrategy. The Agency will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of the tool selected to collect public feedback and may consider an alternative platform in order to maximize its effectiveness and ease of use. In addition to direct public feedback and requests, EPA will look at similar requests made during previous efforts along with information we can surmise from the Agency's Web site metrics as indicators of what is of greatest interest to the public.

Customer Engagement Requirement	Due Date	Status
Establish Customer Feedback Mechanisms	11/30/13	Complete
Describe customer feedback processes	11/30/13	Complete and Ongoing
Include POC in EDG for each data asset	11/30/13	Ongoing
Update epa.gov/digitalstrategy to describe process to engage with customers	11/30/13	Complete and Ongoing
Follow and update process as necessary	Ongoing	Ongoing

V. Data Publication Process (and Exceptions)

The Open Data Policy requires agencies to develop and strengthen policies and processes to ensure that only appropriate data are released to the general public and made available online. EPA must designate one of three "access levels" for each data asset (public, restricted public, and non-public). Exceptions to publicizing data may result from law, regulation, or policy, which address privacy, confidentiality, security, or other valid restrictions.

EPA's data registration, evaluation, and publication processes are being developed as part of the Agency's Environmental Information Management Policy (EIMP). The EIMP is currently undergoing Agency-wide review before being finalized. The EIMP includes a data asset registration procedure that is scheduled to be adopted with the policy. Additional procedures, such as defining the details of the data publication process will follow.

The registration and classification of data assets will be addressed by the following:

- Issue the EIMP, Cataloging EPA Data Resources Procedure and associated Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) which require the registration of data assets.

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- Create comprehensive processes to fill metadata gaps for existing records and ensure compliance with the registration of non-listed assets.
- Modify the EDG to include an initial “data sensitivity” evaluation during the registration of an asset noting a determination of a range of data sensitivity categories such as:
 - Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI)
 - Personally Identifiable Information (PII)
 - Confidential Business Information (CBI)
 - Information with National Security sensitivities

EPA currently conducts reviews to evaluate the appropriate release of information to the public, however, to address the anticipated increase in demand for information the Agency is developing a more formal process to document sensitivity determinations and help set expectations when determinations will be completed. EPA’s Office of General Counsel (OGC) is frequently involved in data release determinations and will be a part of the more formal process--making final determinations on data that is deemed too sensitive for disclosure.

Data Publication Process/Exceptions Requirement	Due Date	Status
Develop Data Publication Process	11/30/13	In Progress
Publish an overview of Data Publication Process on epa.gov/digitalstrategy	11/30/13	General approach included in this document (details to be addressed by procedures associated with, but subsequent to adoption of the EIMP)
Update Process as Necessary	Ongoing	Ongoing

VI. Roles and Responsibilities

EPA understands the need to clarify roles and responsibilities for promoting efficient release and management of data as an asset. EPA has identified leads for the following roles:

Role and Responsibility	POC and Contact Information
Communicating the strategic value of open data to internal stakeholders and the public	Renee Wynn, Acting Chief Information Officer (CIO), (202) 564-6665, wynn.renee@epa.gov
Ensuring data released to the public are as open as appropriate	EPA’s Draft Enterprise Information Management Policy will include processes that will ensure compliance with the procedures for registration and publication of information assets consistent with Open Data principles
Assisting with the use of open data and	EPA’s Draft Enterprise Information Management Policy will

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responding to EPA's implementation of open data requirements	include processes that will ensure compliance with the procedures for registration and publication of information assets consistent with Open Data principles
Engaging entrepreneurs and innovators in the private and nonprofit sectors to encourage and facilitate the use of agency data to build applications and services	EPA will coordinate among existing programs to engage with the public in promoting the use of EPA data assets. The Agency will assess the need to designate a particular resource for engagement purposes, based on the effectiveness of this coordination.
Working with agency components to scale best practices that excel open data practices across the enterprise	Renee Wynn, Acting Chief Information Officer (CIO), (202) 564-6665, wynn.renee@Epa.gov
Update POC and contact information for each listed responsibility in MAX collect as part of the quarterly E-Gov IDC	Updated as needed